AMENDED CLAIM SET:

1. (currently amended) A cellulose acetate which is soluble in an organic solvent and has a carboxyl group and a sulfonic acid group and contains alkali metal, alkaline earth metal, or both alkali metal and alkaline earth metal, wherein said cellulose acetate has ~~at least one feature selected from the group consisting of~~ the following feature ~~features (i), (ii), and~~ (iii):

~~(i) at least part of the carboxyl groups in said cellulose acetate are free carboxyl groups, and said cellulose acetate has a pH of 4.5 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry;~~

~~(ii) said cellulose acetate has a slurry pH of 4.5 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry that additionally incorporates contains at least one member selected from the group consisting of an acid having an acid dissociation exponent pKa of 1.93 to 4.50 in water, an alkali metal salt of said acid, and an alkaline earth metal salt of said acid, and has a pH of 4.5 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry; and~~

(iii) the alkali metal, the alkaline earth metal, or both alkali metal and alkaline earth metal is present in said cellulose acetate in an amount such that the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose acetate is 0.01×10^{-6} to 5.5×10^{-6} equivalent ~~or less~~ in terms of ion equivalent, and a flake of said cellulose acetate

has a pH of 4.5 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry.

2. - 8. (cancelled).

9. (currently amended) The dope cellulose acetate according to Claim 18, ~~8 having at least feature (ii),~~ wherein the total content of ~~the~~ said acid, the alkali metal salt of ~~the~~ said acid, and the alkaline earth metal salt of ~~the~~ said acid is 1×10^{-8} to 2×10^{-5} mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose acetate.

10. (currently amended) The dope ~~cellulose acetate~~ according to Claim 9 ~~having at least feature (ii)~~, wherein the total content of ~~the~~ said acid, the alkali metal salt of ~~the~~ said acid, and the alkaline earth metal salt of ~~the~~ said acid is 1×10^{-7} to 1×10^{-5} mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose acetate.

11. (currently amended) A composition comprising a cellulose acetate that has a carboxyl group and a sulfonic acid group and contains alkali metal, alkaline earth metal, or both alkali metal and alkaline earth metal, wherein a flake of said composition or said cellulose acetate has a pH of 4.5 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry, and said composition or said cellulose acetate has the following feature (ii), (iiia), or (iiib) ~~at least one feature selected from the group consisting of the following features (i), (ii), and (iii)~~:

~~(i) at least part of the carboxyl groups in said cellulose acetate are free carboxyl groups, and said cellulose acetate has a pH of 4.5 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry;~~

(ii) said composition comprises said cellulose acetate ~~contains~~ and at least one member selected from the group consisting of an acid having an acid dissociation exponent pKa of 1.93 to 4.50 in water, an alkali metal salt of said acid, and an alkaline earth metal salt of said acid contained in a proportion of 1×10^{-9} to 3×10^{-5} mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose acetate; ~~, and has a pH of 4.5 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry, and~~

(iiia) ~~(iii)~~ the alkali metal, the alkaline earth metal, or both alkali metal and alkaline earth metal is present in said cellulose acetate in an amount such that the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose acetate is 0.01×10^{-6} to 5.5×10^{-6} equivalent ~~or less~~ in terms of ion equivalent; or

(iiib) said composition comprises said cellulose acetate and at least one member, selected from the group consisting of an acid having an acid dissociation exponent pKa of 1.93 to 4.50 in water, an alkali metal salt of said acid, and an alkaline earth metal salt of said acid, is contained in a proportion of 1×10^{-9} to 3×10^{-5} mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose acetate, and the alkali metal, the alkaline earth metal, or both alkali metal and alkaline earth metal is present in said cellulose acetate in

an amount such that the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose acetate is more than 5.5×10^{-6} equivalent (in terms of ion equivalent).

12. (previously presented) The cellulose acetate composition according to Claim 11, which has a pH of 4.8 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry.

13. (previously presented) The cellulose acetate according to Claim 1, wherein the average degree of acetylation is from 58 to 62.5%.

14. - 17. (cancelled).

18. (currently amended) A dope containing cellulose acetate and an organic solvent, wherein the cellulose acetate is soluble in [[an]] the organic solvent and has a carboxyl group and a sulfonic acid group and contains alkali metal, alkaline earth metal, or both alkali metal and alkaline earth metal, wherein said dope or said cellulose acetate has at least one feature selected from the group consisting of the following feature (ii), (iiia), or (iiib) ~~features (i), (ii), and (iii)~~:

~~(i) at least part of the carboxyl groups in said cellulose acetate are free carboxyl groups, and said cellulose acetate has a pH of 4.5 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry;~~

(ii) said cellulose acetate contains at least one member selected from the group consisting of an acid having an acid dissociation exponent pKa of 1.93 to 4.50 in water, an alkali metal salt of said acid, and an alkaline earth metal salt of said acid, in a proportion of 1×10^{-9} to 3×10^{-5} mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose acetate; ~~and has a pH of 4.5 to 6.0 in the form of a slurry in a proportion of not more than 7.7×10^{-7} moles per 1 gram; and~~

(iiia) ~~(iii)~~ the alkali metal, the alkaline earth metal, or both alkali metal and alkaline earth metal is present in said cellulose acetate in an amount such that the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose acetate is 0.01×10^{-6} to 5.5×10^{-6} equivalent ~~or less~~ in terms of ion equivalent; or

(iiib) the alkali metal, the alkaline earth metal, or both alkali metal and alkaline earth metal is present in said cellulose acetate in an amount such that the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose acetate is more than 5.5×10^{-6} equivalent (in terms of ion equivalent), and said cellulose acetate contains at least one member selected from the group consisting of an acid having an acid dissociation exponent pKa of 1.93 to 4.50 in water, an alkali metal salt of said acid, and an alkaline earth metal salt of said acid, in a proportion of 1×10^{-9} to 3×10^{-5} mole relative to 1 gram of the cellulose acetate.

19. (cancelled).

20. (previously presented) A method for improving the releasability of a film from a support which comprises casting a dope of Claim 18 on the support.

21. (cancelled).

22. (cancelled)

23. (previously presented) A dope according to Claim 18, wherein said organic solvent comprises a halogenated hydrocarbon.

24. (cancelled).

25. (cancelled).

26. (cancelled).

27. (previously presented) The cellulose acetate according to claim 1, wherein said cellulose acetate is soluble in an organic solvent and insoluble in water.

28. (new) The cellulose acetate according to Claim 1,

wherein a cellulose as a raw material of said cellulose acetate comprises at least a wood pulp.

29. (new) The composition according to Claim 11, wherein a cellulose as a raw material of said cellulose acetate comprises at least a wood pulp.

30. (new) The dope according to Claim 18, wherein a cellulose as a raw material of said cellulose acetate comprises at least a wood pulp.

31. (new) The cellulose acetate according to claim 1, wherein a cellulose as a raw material of said cellulose acetate is at last one selected from a hardwood pulp and a softwood pulp.

32. (new) The composition according to claim 11, wherein a cellulose as a raw material of said cellulose acetate is at last one selected from a hardwood pulp and a softwood pulp.

33. (new) The dope according to claim 18, wherein a cellulose as a raw material of said cellulose acetate is at last one selected from a hardwood pulp and a softwood pulp.